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MAY 1 1960

Approved For Release 1999/09/17 : CIA-RDP75-000

The Vulnerable Soviet

Moscow Reveals Defense Weakness In Publicizing U. S. Plane Incursion

By HAMILTON W. BALDWIN, JR.

Moscow continued to take the fallings rather than the anti-aircraft rocket that forced him down.

The altitude of the plane at the time it was alleged to have been hit is important. An analysis of the available present Soviet statements

leads one to conclude that the

Lockheed U-2, which had

flew over the "heartland" of the Soviet Union, had

been shot down at a height of about 70 miles above the

"heartland" of the Soviet Union, according to the

Soviet statements.

It was shot down. Moreover,

statements from Moscow and Washington made it clear that

United States aircraft, operating at high altitudes, had flown

over the heart of the Soviet

Union, with immunity to any

Soviet counter-measures, on

many occasions.

Mr. Khrushchev himself disclosed some of the Soviet weak-

nets in his rambling remarks

at the Czechoslovak Embassy

in Moscow Monday night.

He declared that on July 1,

1956, a United States plane flew

over the Soviet Union as far

as Kiev, 250 miles from the

frontiers of the Eastern Com-

munist states. He added that

"from such behavior we drew

the conclusion to improve rock-

ets, to improve fighters."

Another penetration cited

This suggests that at that

time there was no Soviet anti-

aircraft defense that could in-

tercept or shoot down a plane

flying at high altitude. Mr.

Khrushchev knows there have

been many other deep penetra-

tions of Soviet air space since

then.

High-flying Lockheed U-2's,

often described as powered

gliders because of their ex-

tremely light wing loading and

their ability to glide long dis-

tances with a slow loss of alti-

tude, undoubtedly made most

of these penetrations, but not

all of them. It is quite possible

that the Miss flight to which

Mr. Khrushchev referred was

one of the earlier ones known

to have been made by the U-2.

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